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ORGANIZATION OF WORK

PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE WORLD CONFERENCE
AND RELATED DOCUMENTATION

PARTICIPATION OF REPRESENTATIVES OF LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES
IN THE PREPARATORY MEETINGS AND AT THE CONFERENCE ITSELF

REGIONAL MEETINGS

REPORT ON STUDIES AND DOCUMENTATION FOR THE WORLD CONFERENCE

Report of the Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights
at its forty-eighth session

1. In paragraph 3 of its resolution 1992/37, the Commission on Human Rights recommended that a summary of its discussions on the World Conference on Human Rights be made available to the Preparatory Committee. The following report is made in accordance with that recommendation.

2. The deliberations of the Commission on the World Conference on Human Rights began with an opening statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights. Statements were subsequently made by representatives of the following States: Australia, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Germany, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Italy, Japan, Norway (on behalf of the Nordic States), Portugal, Russian Federation, Senegal, Uruguay and Venezuela. Statements were also made by the following

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non-governmental organizations: International Association of Educators for World Peace, Latin American Federation of Associations of Relatives of Disappeared Detainees and Service, Peace and Justice in Latin America.

3. All speakers confirmed their Governments' support for the holding of the World Conference and their satisfaction at the general progress of the preparations.

4. Most speakers acknowledged that the Conference should be guided by the objectives set out in General Assembly resolutions 45/155 and 46/116 and Commission resolution 1991/30. A number of speakers also stressed the desirability of involving in the work of the Conference the chairpersons of the Commission and the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, the chairpersons of the treaty bodies and of working groups of the Commission, and Special Rapporteurs, as well as other concerned persons. They also stressed the importance of the widest possible participation of States in the preparatory process and the importance of being represented at the Conference at the highest level of Government. In this connection, some speakers also noted the role and the contribution of non-governmental organizations to the work of the Conference and its preparatory process. Most speakers said that they considered the establishment of the fund for providing financial assistance for the travel of representatives of the least developed countries to be a welcome and important initiative, although some non-governmental organizations expressed the wish for the fund to be broadened to meet the needs of representatives of non-governmental organizations, whose financial means were limited, so as to enhance universality.

5. With regard to the regional meetings, several speakers stated that they were a good opportunity to review the human rights achievements of each region and the obstacles thereto. The meetings should be exclusively for the States of the region concerned, according to one speaker, who also indicated that while his Government had no opposition to the participation of non-governmental organizations in the meeting of his region, they should be from the region and play a consultative role. Another speaker considered that the regional meetings should hear the views of countries with different cultures and national experiences, but without focusing on regional differences that might limit universality.

6. A number of speakers made suggestions relevant to the preparatory Committee's programme of work. One argued that the second session should deal with substantive issues. In particular, it should finalize the agenda and rules of procedure for the World Conference, and should give some initial consideration to the form and even the content of the final document for the Conference. In that respect, the speaker recognized that drafting of the document as such might be premature. Other speakers agreed that work on the agenda was both important and urgent and that the essential themes for consideration by the Conference could already be established, having regard to the objectives laid down by the General Assembly.

7. Most statements made during the debate also referred to substantive elements for consideration either as such or as part of the preparation of studies and documentation for the Conference. Among the specific matters

mentioned as meriting the attention of the Conference were: promoting universal adherence to international human rights instruments and standards, reinforcement of implementation and monitoring mechanisms, the importance of human rights education and training, the need for increased resources for human rights programmes, including resources for the World Conference, reaffirmation of the indivisibility and interrelationship of all forms of rights, enhancing public awareness of human rights and identifying the principles applicable to, and encouraging the development of, national or regional institutions. Other suggested topics included the impact of extreme poverty, terrorism and other obstacles to the realization of human rights, the promotion of the rights of women, indigenous peoples (having regard in particular to the International Year for the World's Indigenous People in 1993), new proposals for effective responses by the United Nations to emergency human rights situations, impunity of human rights violators and measures to rationalize and improve present systems of reporting and follow-up of human rights at the national level.

8. Many speakers emphasized that the focus of interest should be towards implementation of existing human rights norms, although some proposals were made for adjustment or revision of existing instruments and the development of new standards and mechanisms in particular areas. One speaker expressed the view that full implementation needed to take into account the particular characteristics of different States, but rejected politically created obstacles to implementation. Others identified undesirable phenomena that affected implementation: politicization, ideological elements and fragmentation of rights, the selective use of human rights to attack other States and interference in the internal affairs of States. Some speakers considered that different levels of development might entail different human rights safeguards, which were matters for each country to decide in light of its own circumstances. Other speakers stressed the legitimacy of international concern about human rights situations and the need for full implementation of human rights-related undertakings which have been freely accepted. Some speakers proposed the establishment of new mechanisms, such as a court of human rights or a high commissioner for human rights. Proposals were made for an objective evaluation of human rights in all countries and a further proposal was made for an integrated study of international instruments, procedures and mechanisms. One speaker suggested the preparation by each State of a national human rights action plan, based on its own situation, for implementation. According to another speaker, new ideas were needed to help lead States to give full effect to the instruments they had accepted, including the integration of human rights into the forefront of the programmes of United Nations agencies and greater coordination of activities in support of vulnerable groups.

9. Several speakers dealt specifically with the relationship between development, democracy and human rights. Some States attached much importance to the relationship between development and human rights, with the key to the realization of human rights being social progress, stability and economic development. One speaker said that, for (his) Government the World Conference would be an opportunity to show that the right to development synthesized all other categories of human rights and several speakers indicated the importance of maintaining the principles of interdependence, indivisibility and

non-selectivity of rights. Another speaker indicated that while democracy was a prime factor in development, it could not by itself guarantee the achievement of all categories of rights. One speaker mentioned the desirability of avoiding confrontation in that context between North and South, while others stated the position of their Governments on a connection between development assistance and the implementation and promotion of human rights.

10. On the completion of the debate, the Commission adopted resolution 1992/37.